

Attn: Dave Navecky – Docket No. FD35952

Surface Transportation Board  
Office of Environmental Analysis  
395 E. Street SQ  
Washington, DC 20423-0001

Dear Mr. Navecky:

I would like to express my concerns over the proposed Great Lakes Basin Transportation, LLC rail line project. Docket# 35952. I oppose the project and ask the Surface Transportation Board to deny the project. I have many concerns regarding this project and the impact it will have on the area in which I reside. I live at 8491 N. 6000W. Road in Manteno, IL. I live approximately 2 miles north of the proposed tracks and about 2.5 miles north of the Camp Shaw-Waw-Nas-See campground which is adjacent to the Kankakee State Park. The negative impact to the area in which I reside will be devastating.

My husband, my 4 year old daughter and I just made the move to our house out in rural Manteno. We now live a mile from where I grew up on my family's farm. We moved here to help with the family farm where my dad is aging into retirement and my brother is taking over. We picked this particular spot because it was peaceful and quiet and that is what we wanted for our family. Our souls belong here. This was supposed to be our forever home, our dream. A dream made reality through hard work, saving, and planning. Now this dream has turned into a nightmare.

We currently live approximately 10-15 miles from the closest rail system. I do not hear, see, or feel trains where I currently live, which all will change if this railroad proposal is approved. The problem is that the proposed railroad cuts the northwest side of Kankakee off from the main part of the county. This impacts our daily routes to and from our home. With 110 trains a day going 70mph our daily commute to work and school will take much longer and be more dangerous. As some roads will be closing, we will have to start sharing these main roads with farm equipment which will also impact our commute times during planting and harvest season. Not to mention longer response times for emergency vehicles to our area (fire, police, and ambulance). If there is a train derailment of hazardous materials our emergency response teams will need to be trained. Who is paying for that special training? Who will be responsible for the cleanup if this company is a Limited Liability Corporation? What will happen if there is a spill and my well where I get the water for my home is contaminated? Who is going to cover the medical costs for my family when the quality of the air around us is destroyed by 110 trains a day?

The Kankakee State Park and Camp Shaw-Waw-Nas-See are about 2.5 miles south of my home. People come to these parks to enjoy the peacefulness and tranquility that the area offers. People who frequent the park enjoy the peaceful canoe rides, quiet fishing, thrilling hunting, tranquil nature walks, and beautiful scenery that many photographers use as a backdrop. There are Indian burial grounds to visit, horses to ride, summer camping, trails to hike and bald eagles to marvel at within these parks. None of that will be the case when these loud, rumbling trains cut through every 13 minutes and pollute the environment around it for miles. The trains will destroy what the state and county have worked hard to preserve and maintain. Kankakee County and the state of Illinois will lose one of the few treasures it has to boast about. The environmental change will be devastating to this area.

The impact to the county's economy and the country's farming community would be felt by all. Jobs are being lost all over the county and this would be another hit. My father and brother are full-time generational farmers. Land is a limited resource. Farmers need land to do their jobs and without it they are jobless. Farming is a huge part of Kankakee County's economy. The proposed rail port alone would take over 16,000 acres of Kankakee County farmland, that's 5-6% of the county's farmland, a limited resource, no longer viable for farming. That percent doesn't include the acres lost from the tracks themselves, the easement, or the viable farmland damaged because of cut offs and drainage issues these tracks would cause. The permanent loss of this land would be equivalent to the permanent loss of jobs and permanent loss of a resource required to make food. Also, the argument that landowners will be compensated by a high per acre rate doesn't help many of the area's farmers as many of them rent the land they farm. Can we as a country afford to continue to let so much good, viable, high grade farm soil be lost forever?

As a citizen impacted by the Great Lakes Basin railroad, I strongly urge you to oppose this proposal. I could go on and on about the negative impacts that this railroad and rail port will bring. I believe that the inefficiencies of the Chicago Train terminals should not be solved by creating problems in the countryside. I could point out that established companies within the rail industry have stated that they want nothing to do with this project. I could point out that this is a private company that has no track record or experience in the railroad business. I could point out that the state of Illinois and Kankakee County do not have the funds to fix this mess if this private company fails or goes out of business. I could point out that this one man's dream of building a legacy for his grandkids is destroying the dreams of thousands of farmers and their legacies. Eminent domain is intended for government or public trust investments not for the profit of a private limited liability transportation corporation. Eminent domain was not intended to be the gateway to allow for one man to make a legacy for his family, but rather to protect the legacy of thousands. This proposed railroad is not in the best interest of anyone, but the private investors looking to make a profit for themselves. I ask as the daughter of a proud farmer, a sister of a hard-working farmer, and as a mother of child whom I dreamed would have a similar childhood experience of growing up on a farm to please do the right thing. Stand up for the thousands of individuals, families, communities and deny the proposal of the Great Lakes Basin Railroad.

Sincerely,  
Kathi DePoister  
8491 N. 6000W Road  
Manteno, IL 60950

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